

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan announced today that Sarasota County has been awarded a \$74,812 anti-crime grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office will use the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program grant to help support their Juvenile Assessment Center program.

"The JAG program allows state and local governments to use federal funds for local solutions to local problems," said Buchanan. "By assisting law enforcement officers processing juvenile arrests, particularly the arrests of juveniles with substance abuse problems that relate to criminal behavior, this funding will help reduce juvenile crime and substance abuse."

The Sarasota County Juvenile Assessment Center provides a range of services to juveniles who are detained by law enforcement, including detention screening, intake, psychosocial assessments, drug testing, referrals to treatment providers, and case management.

"The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office is very happy with the award of \$74,812 from the Edward Byrne Memorial JAG program to Sarasota County," said Sheriff Bill Balkwill. "This award will benefit both law enforcement and juveniles by streamlining the arrest process and enhancing the services provided to the juveniles during the process."

The total amount of federal funding available through the JAG program this year is \$292 million. Funds awarded through the formula grant program may be used for training, personnel, and equipment and information systems for law enforcement programs. Funding may also be used for prosecution and court programs, drug treatment programs, corrections programs and technology improvement programs.